9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906)1912
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Nayar

174 not borne out either by any Sanskrit authority or Dravidian traditions;[1] but certain legends refer to conflicts between them and the Hindu colonists of later times, and these are said to have been led by Parasurama, and the Nagas from Pātāla whom they found in possession of the country.[2] The latter were not forced to divide the spoil with the Kshatriyas or warriors who elsewhere counterbalanced the power of the Brahmans, and obliged them to keep up a continual struggle in which victory alternated with defeat. These internecine dissensions gave the indigenous element a chance to recover itself by degrees, and finally gave birth to a military aristocracy called the Nayars.[3]

701 The Nayars of ancient times formed the chief militia in Cochin, Malabar and Travancore, and their valour and other fighting qualities evoked the admiration of foreigners, and inspired even the restless Portuguese poet Cameons, who described them in the following apt lines:—

The military character of the Nayars.

> Poliar the labouring clans were named:
> By the proud Nayars the noble rank is claimed;
> The toils of culture and of art they scorn:
> The shining faulchion brandished in the right;
> Their left arm wields the target in the fight.

175 One of the earliest accounts of the Nayars is found in the 701 writings of Duarte Barbosa, who described them as men of noble descent, who had to be armed as knights by the king or lord with whom they lived, and who could not call themselves Nayars until they had been so equipped as to bear arms. They were generally sent to school at the age of seven to learn all [868] manner of athletic feats and to enable them to use their [147] weapons.[4] Their sinews and joints were so stretched and anointed with the *oyle sesamus* by skillful fellows called "Panicars," who were captains in war, that they became very light and nimble; and could "wind and twine their bodies" as if they had no bones. They cast themselves backwards and forwards, high and low, to the astonishment of the beholders, and the delight in their weapon was so great that they

1. Grammar of the Dravidian Languages, Introduction, page 107.
2. The Sun and the Serpent, page 107.
3. Primitive Folk, page 107.
4. A description of the Coasts of East Africa and Malabar by Duarte Barbosa, page 128—129.